

James L. Swindell Interview #1

Company K, 317th Inf Reg

(Library of Congress: Veterans History Project; interviewed by Douglas Clanin)

(MS Word Audio Transcript [NOT edited, just transcribed])

00:00:04 Speaker 1

My name is Douglas clan and I'm an editor with the Indiana Historical Society in Indianapolis. I'm on the outskirts of Alexandria and Madison County, Indiana. On July 5th, 1995.

00:00:16 Speaker 1

Beginning this tape recording at about 6:10 PM, I'm in the home of Mr. James L Swindell, SWINDELL to discuss aspects of his military service during World War 2 as a member of Company K, the 317th Infantry Regiment, 80th Infantry Division.

00:00:36 Speaker 1

Mr. Swindell, where and when were you born?

00:00:39 Speaker 2

June, June the 26th, 1926.

00:00:42 Speaker 1

And right here in Alexandria.

00:00:44 Speaker 2

Can I hear in Alexandria?

00:00:46 Speaker 1

What were the names of your parents, Mr. Swindell?

00:00:48 Speaker 2

You know, my father's name was Irma Marsh. Wendell. My mother name was Anna, Tee Swindell.

00:00:54 Speaker 1

Did you have any brothers and sisters, or do you have brothers and sisters?

00:00:58 Speaker 2

I was the the fifth child of a family of five. I have two brothers and two sisters.

00:01:05 Speaker 2

But the the brothers have passed away. Now I should have two living sisters.

00:01:10 Speaker 1

When you were growing up, what were your parents principal occupations?

00:01:14 Speaker 2

My dad was a glass blower. He I welded the feet.

00:01:20 Speaker 2

On a on a Tumblr or glass with with molded glass and any blue glass, and my mother was a housewife.

00:01:28 Speaker 1

What company or companies did your dad work for as a glass blower?

00:01:32 Speaker 2

It's called Lippincott in Alexandria, which is since been gone, and then at one time the lip and cut glass factory in Alexandria. Work was slow and he went to Columbus, OH, and worked for a company over there, but I don't know what it was. And he I remember he'd send clothes on. Mom, wash clothes.

00:01:53 Speaker 2

Him back then. Then I went to visit him one time over there went in Columbus. OH, and on my father's side, my mother. I mean, on my mother. Excuse me. On my mother's side. Her brother has also worked for the lip and Glass company. And she tells the story that in the summer time they.

00:02:08 Speaker 2

They're cut, or I mean in the winter time, and you could track them home with the blood in the snow and her my mother's father, which would be my grandfather, was a glass maker. He knew the formula.

00:02:22 Speaker 2

To formulate glass as so much sand and whatever it is to put in, but he couldn't read and write that he had it all up here in his head. And then in later years, in later years, when they made him start docking and know how much of this and so forth he put in, he remembered that he'd come home. And then my grandmother would write out, fill out his papers and and take it back to the factory for him.

00:02:43 Speaker 1

Where was that Lippincott Glass factory located? Mr. Swindell? Do you recall?

00:02:47 Speaker 2

Yes, it's just West, all of Alexandria out there, which is now the there's a a plastic chair factory out there and it's right out there where the behind the.

00:03:03 Speaker 2

The Aladdin factory where they made Aladdin lamps. It's it's in that area in that little industrial area right there. But you can see the building there. There's a lot of broken windows in there, but that was where the glass factory was.

00:03:13 Speaker 2

And.

00:03:13 Speaker 2

My my grandparents lived and my mother lived in Alexandria there.

00:03:18

Hmm.

00:03:19 Speaker 1

How many years do you recall how many years the Lippincott company was in business?

00:03:23 Speaker 2

Well, I have no idea.

00:03:26 Speaker 2

Gave us long, long before I was my mother, and I said earlier she didn't have a job, but she didn't. When I was married, but when she was 16 years old, they had a lot of restaurants in Alexandria, and she tells us about going up to the restaurants in Alexander and making pies at 16 years old for for the people. And she told how many they made all the time.

00:03:49 Speaker 1

And you attended elementary and high school right here in Alexandria then, is that correct?

00:03:53 Speaker 2

Sir. Well, I go back a little bit further than that. I've started in the one room schoolhouse.

00:03:58 Speaker 2

Which would be in Madison County, but it was in the northern North eastern section of Madison County was called Carolina. It was one room school house.

00:04:06 Speaker 1

How would you spell that?

00:04:07 Speaker 2

Sir Carolina, Carolina. You know, some one room schoolhouse I attended there till the 6th grade, and then they opened a consolidated school, which is Cunningham School.

00:04:22 Speaker 2

East of Alexandria and the summer prior to the school opened up as a kid, I played on the on the scaffolding and the superstructure of the Cunningham school out there, and the first day of school I got a scar on the end.

00:04:37 Speaker 2

Of my.

00:04:38 Speaker 2

My chin here for some reason. They had the floors extremely waxed and the stairways was waxed and they were coming in their mid term and 6th grade with a load of books like that and I slip on that and I.

00:04:51 Speaker 2

And dinner Burger comes up, cuts my lip, and the kids are falling everywhere. It was a mess.

00:04:59 Speaker 1

So did you finish up your elementary schooling out there at Cunningham school now?

00:05:02 Speaker 2

Yeah, I finished my elementary and then I come to the Alexandria High School, which has now since gone, which was downtown.

00:05:09 Speaker 2

I played on the Alexander High School basketball team for for a while.

00:05:15 Speaker 2

A for, at least for a year or so.

00:05:19 Speaker 1

But you finished up your high school schooling in three years. Is that correct, Sir?

00:05:22 Speaker 2

Yeah, sure.

00:05:23 Speaker 1

And finished and graduated in 1944. Now the reason is you you told me off tape that you had been ill.

00:05:31 Speaker 2

I lost the greatest of a school back in 3rd or 4th grade with anemia and I took Beryl gallon and gallon of red medicine of some kind that was supposed to cure it, help you build your blood cells that come from a little one horse town. Doctor up here at Alexander, Dr. Gibson. And he was a Canadian that come down into this town and.

00:05:51 Speaker 2

Practiced here.

00:05:52 Speaker 2

Three years. And then I always said, well, I'm going to make this up. And then when the war come along, I was in high school. I just graduated from elementary in 1941, when the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor. So then then when I started high school, the war was accelerating. And then I decided I was going to make up this.

00:06:12 Speaker 2

This year of school and I took extra subjects in the order that I didn't want to be. I didn't want to get out of school deferment just to finish school. I just didn't want to do that. And then then when I graduated, I asked for me to.

00:06:25 Speaker 2

Duction in the army and it took.

00:06:27 Speaker 2

18 years old.

00:06:30 Speaker 1

What did your parents think about you as a young, very young person joining the service? Did they have any objections to that?

00:06:36 Speaker 2

They didn't express it too much. If they did, they they they didn't get radical of any kind, and they knew that's what I wanted to do. And I did it and they they supported me. They didn't fight me in any way.

00:06:49

OK.

00:06:50 Speaker 1

You know, some parents, I.

00:06:51 Speaker 1

Think.

00:06:52 Speaker 1

Protested about it, you know? Listen, you were the youngest child, though, too, I.

00:06:53 Speaker 2

Right.

00:06:57 Speaker 1

Just thought it.

00:06:57 Speaker 2

Yeah, I was the youngest. I was a baby of the family.

00:06:59 Speaker 1

So I thought maybe because you were the baby of the family that.

00:07:02 Speaker 1

There might be some.

00:07:03 Speaker 2

Well, they didn't express it. I'm sure they had a lot of anxiety about it and.

00:07:08 Speaker 2

My mother was a praying person and and I'm sure she prayed a lot for me while I was gone, I.

00:07:14 Speaker 2

Know she did. Somebody did.

00:07:17 Speaker 1

In addition to playing basketball, I want to get back just a second before we.

00:07:20 Speaker 1

Get into the service.

00:07:21 Speaker 1

Did you have any odd jobs, especially during the summers? So while you were attending?

00:07:26 Speaker 1

High school or?

00:07:28 Speaker 2

I did something new that that that a lot of people don't even believe that that happened. I've always been big for my.

00:07:36 Speaker 2

He said while I was on in the country.

00:07:39 Speaker 2

All the other farmers used to get me to make hay all time. I made hay from years. It seemed like some and then prior to that I milked cows around the neighborhood for for other farmers want to take a vacation, you know, that's back before we had milk machine. You milk them behind, you know, and.

00:07:54 Speaker 2

But then then the last.

00:07:57 Speaker 2

When I was 16 years old, we had such a shortage of manpower here for the war plants in in Anderson especially.

00:08:05 Speaker 2

They would let 16 year old boys General Motors. I was hired in at General Motors when I was 16 years old.

00:08:13 Speaker 2

And until they wouldn't let me run machinery. But they had this little plant out on the West End of Anderson. There they called Midwest.

00:08:21 Speaker 2

And what it was, was it kind of like a canning factory back then? The all your starters and your little components of starters. But they was put in a in a hard, hard.

00:08:36 Speaker 2

Or not not plastic.

00:08:39 Speaker 2

Cardboard cardboard box with a metal top and bottom. And that's because it can like that for overseas shipments. So they wouldn't get moisture in them. So they had these Canon machines with it, they can compose.

00:08:50 Speaker 2

But my job was clear back on the back end of the place, and I checked all the inventory that come in. I was inventory checker and we'd get nuts and bolts from the other factory and they'd come into big trays. You had a scale, you pull them up on the scale and every nut you dropped over here was 1000. Every when you dropped over here was 500 and everything till you bounce your skills. Then you counted your 1500 and that's how you took your.

00:09:12 Speaker 2

Inventory and on them trade. And then they had a hook and you pull them back down there.

00:09:16 Speaker 2

That's how we did inventory.

00:09:19 Speaker 2

I was 16 years old, so when I got out of service, my time went on.

00:09:25 Speaker 2

And I went back into General Motors, which at that time I would have been over 20 and which was a mistake.

00:09:34 Speaker 2

I didn't take enough time off to get rested up from from my experience.

00:09:39 Speaker 2

And they put me in plant one where they made generators and starters.

00:09:45 Speaker 2

And a starter has what they call a pool shoe that's that's on each side, you know. And it's a piece of metal about so thick that they stamp these things in. And I never figured out why, but they stamped them out down here. I took them off a conveyor and dropped them off that conveyor and the steel tubs.

00:10:01 Speaker 2

And I worked close to this loading starters on on skids and stuff. Well after a while that.

00:10:10 Speaker 2

Metal dropping in them 10 tubs got to sounding like a machine gun and rattling. Tell me like that and I walked out there one day and I said that's it. I'm. I'm getting out there and I'm never going to come back. I never come back. Which.

00:10:25 Speaker 2

Of course, if I had it, I'm 69 years old now. I'm still working and I could retire.

00:10:29 Speaker 2

Now when I was 46.

00:10:34 Speaker 2

So that was a penalty for going to the service.

00:10:34 Speaker 1

Like.

00:10:37 Speaker 1

And not giving yourself enough time. You got home.

00:10:39 Speaker 2

Yeah. And I didn't give myself enough time and.

00:10:41 Speaker 1

When you got back home, you immediately started to work. A lot of fellows said.

00:10:44 Speaker 2

Yeah, I went back to work and.

00:10:46 Speaker 1

But after what you've been through, why? It was just too much, I understand.

00:10:49 Speaker 2

That was too much. I couldn't handle it. And then then apparently my my parents realized the the nervous condition that I was in.

00:10:58 Speaker 2

So then I started farming.

00:11:01 Speaker 2

But my original plans was when I was in high school, I took drafting and advanced aircraft drafting and and I liked drafting, and I'd I'd worked through the summer and I bought my own drafting tools and boards and and that type of stuff I'm going to pursue that when I got home. But when I got home I was so nervous I couldn't hold a ink.

00:11:20 Speaker 2

Then I couldn't sit at the drafting table.

00:11:23 Speaker 2

And I just couldn't handle it. I just couldn't sit there. But that was my.

00:11:28 Speaker 2

In high school, I worked towards being a draftsman.

00:11:32 Speaker 2

But then then I went into farming.

00:11:35 Speaker 2

And.

00:11:36 Speaker 1

And you've been farming ever since up to the present.

00:11:38 Speaker 2

Yeah, I've had off farm jobs, worked in factories two or three times over the years over school bus and that type of thing. I've I've done just about everything besides farm, you know. You know, I've jobs and work in factories and that type of stuff. And then.

00:11:54 Speaker 2

I've been. I I. I started Holland agricultural limestone about 30 years ago.

00:12:02 Speaker 2

An agricultural limestone is it's not a fertilizer, it's actually ground. Limestone, ground stone that you grind to a powder consistency and the farmers put it on the field to neutralize the soil from an acidity to a neutral sweet stage, which makes your fertilized more effective. And I hold hold out for two.

00:12:22 Speaker 2

For about almost 30 years. And then I I quit. That and.

00:12:28 Speaker 2

My son worked for him.

00:12:30 Speaker 2

And it's kind of kind of ironic the way it happened. I quit. I had two trucks and my son worked for me the year I quit. And then that in October, then that following December, my wife fell off a 2 step, 2 foot step ladder out here in the yard, getting up Christmas lights and and.

00:12:50 Speaker 2

Broke her right ankle and 30 something pieces splintered it.

00:12:55 Speaker 2

And the doctor debated about whether to save it or cut it off. And so then anyway, I had to take care of her for quite a while after that, which I would have been able to do for a stupid whole time.

00:13:07 Speaker 2

Then she ended up being crippled over. But she did keep her leg. Her foot.

00:13:14 Speaker 1

How many acres do you farm here currently, Mr. Swindell.

00:13:17 Speaker 2

Well, I own 132 acres here. I'm farming about 350 all total right now.

00:13:23 Speaker 2

Primarily corn, corn, soybeans, wheat and I've in the past they've been keeping around 50 to 70 head of cattle. All time I had small, medium and large and I was just kind of rotating cattle through there.

00:13:37 Speaker 2

We're on a downtrend in the cattle market right now and and I've kind of lost interest and got older and so now I'm just almost out of the cattle business. But I used to feed a lot of cattle and years back I used to feed the dogs.

00:13:50 Speaker 2

And back in the 40s I had 2000 headed laying hens around here, which is a lot, lot back then. Today it's a spoonful, you know. But at that time 2000 landings was quite a bit you.

00:14:00

Yeah, yeah.

00:14:01 Speaker 2

Know.

00:14:02 Speaker 2

But but my wife and and my sister and her husband, they all helped, you know, so.

00:14:09 Speaker 2

We survived that way.

00:14:10 Speaker 1

OK, you really have been a busy person.

00:14:12 Speaker 2

Sold sold Hogs for 11 cents a pound to make \$2000 form payments back in them days, and it takes a lot of 11 cent hogs to make \$2000 year form payments. That's only \$22.00 for a head of hog. I was paying \$2000 a year, plus new.

00:14:32 Speaker 2

On this phone.

00:14:34 Speaker 1

It's tough to keep going in those circumstances.

00:14:36 Speaker 2

It's been tough on the.

00:14:38 Speaker 2

But I've I've always enjoyed it. But here in the later years since.

00:14:44 Speaker 2

Since decisions has gotten the base of critical on marketing and that stuff has took a lot of fun out of it, you know, you make a mistake. No bigger knife farm anymore. I make a mistake. I'm in trouble financially. You know, if something don't turn out right.

00:14:59 Speaker 2

Back years ago of corn fluctuated \$0.05 from harvest time until the next summer. That was about all it ever done. Now it can run up 20-30 cents a day on the Board of Trade, three days in a row. Same with soybeans, it can run and then after the end of three days they can just take it off off completely and do whatever they want to do to it. To have control over it for three days. Then after that, go where it was.

00:15:20 Speaker 1

Very proposition.

00:15:22 Speaker 1

It's really a big gamble, bigger than it ever was.

00:15:26 Speaker 1

In farming now.

00:15:27 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:15:28 Speaker 1

We're getting back to the World War 2 era. You you entered the United States Army on August 19th, 1944. You enlisted into the service. And where were you sent for your basic training?

00:15:41 Speaker 2

Temple TX, which is about 90 miles from Austin, TX.

00:15:46 Speaker 1

How many weeks were you in?

00:15:47 Speaker 1

Basic training down there.

00:15:49 Speaker 2

I only had 12 weeks of basic training.

00:15:52 Speaker 2

When the Battle of the Bulge broke out in Germany and they needed men bad, so they cut the training off.

00:16:00 Speaker 2

And they sent me to Europe and they let me come home and spend a couple of days home in December, and then I shipped out in January for the Battle of Bulge.

00:16:11 Speaker 1

Let's see. You left on eight January 19, 4514, January 1945. Where did you leave? What part did you leave from?

00:16:20 Speaker 1

And where did?

00:16:20 Speaker 1

You arrive in.

00:16:22 Speaker 2

Camp Camp, Camp, Kilma, New Jersey.

00:16:22

Europe.

00:16:28 Speaker 2

A on a on at that time was the third largest ship that that was in the water was the Ella France, which is a French ship, and they'd converted it into a troop ship.

00:16:41 Speaker 2

And I've farmer never, ever loaded hogs.

00:16:46 Speaker 2

On a truck as confined as we were in that ship, the bottom bunk laid on the bottom on the floor. The top. When we reached the ceiling and was probably 10 foot seal with, I would say not more than 18 to 20 inch.

00:17:01 Speaker 2

Between the the beds and the aisle way was wasn't any more than 20 inches, and you couldn't pass each other on the aisle of you passed each other. You had to step up to let the other person by.

00:17:14 Speaker 2

And when we left the harbor.

00:17:17 Speaker 2

They wouldn't let us come up on board to see the Statue of Liberty because they said, well, you're a troop ship. We don't want some spy out there saying, of course, they probably knew what it was anyhow, you know, and I happen to be on D deck, which is 4th.

00:17:28 Speaker 2

4 decks below, which is just above the engine room, but all the other decks are the same way.

00:17:33 Speaker 2

And I said to myself, well, OK, be that way. If you don't let me see the Statue of Liberty, I'm gonna leave.

00:17:38 Speaker 2

And come back and see it.

00:17:40 Speaker 2

And I did. And that was, in my mind over there.

00:17:43 Speaker 2

As I come back and I see the Statue of Liberty, when I come back.

00:17:48 Speaker 1

Where did you land in Europe when you finally arrived?

00:17:50 Speaker 1

Do you recall?

00:17:50 Speaker 2

I didn't. I didn't land in Europe, Atlanta in Glasgow, Scotland, clear up in the northern part and they put us on a train. Then we trained from Glasgow, Scotland down to the South and across England to the and then to the English Channel.

00:17:54 Speaker 1

With Scott.

00:18:08 Speaker 2

And then then we crossed the English Channel on what they call a liberty ship.

00:18:15 Speaker 2

But.

00:18:17 Speaker 2

The problem was.

00:18:19 Speaker 2

We loaded at night.

00:18:21 Speaker 2

And was supposed to unload the next morning and they didn't put enough food on.

00:18:26 Speaker 2

And when we got across the English Channel on the French side, the channel was so rough that the boat stood there and went 15 to 20 feet up and down like this for three days sitting out there like that on an English Channel.

00:18:39 Speaker 2

And we ran out of food. There wasn't nothing for us to eat. And so the third day they said, well, we're going to get you off because there's nothing to eat.

00:18:46 Speaker 2

And we didn't have anything the day before.

00:18:49 Speaker 2

So they put the landing crafts up there and they had a steel ladder down the side of the the Liberty ship.

00:18:54 Speaker 2

And when the ship came down, it was on a plane, same plane where you could step out into the boat.

00:19:00 Speaker 2

If you missed that you went up like that 15 to 20 feet and some of them guys would get out there on the end of that and they would be afraid to step off and they'd ride that two or three times, so.

00:19:11 Speaker 2

Then somebody started hauling, pushing, you know, like that. But that time everybody's all lined up behind you with all their gear, and they're pushing it like that.

00:19:18 Speaker 2

You.

00:19:18 Speaker 2

Know. So if you didn't get off in about the two or three times, it got pushed off and I sudden myself. And ain't no way I'm going to marry that thing up there two or three times when it come down. I stepped off that first time because.

00:19:31 Speaker 2

I'm basically afraid of water. I'm not. I can't swim. I I can't float. I don't really like water and I'm afraid of water. And so I got off on the first time down and then when we left Kemmer, New Jersey.

00:19:45 Speaker 2

They.

00:19:46

Yeah.

00:19:47 Speaker 2

I don't know why, but they packed us down with odds. Say close to 90 lbs of gear.

00:19:53 Speaker 2

On our backs and some of the little guys couldn't even pick them up would would set the the pack up on a bench or something like that. He gets strapped into him and and and to help him up on his feet and then about every.

00:20:05 Speaker 2

10 or 15th Guy they stuck an M1 rifle. That guy had to carry that well. The guy in front of I was fortunate I missed that I didn't have to carry their arm.

00:20:12 Speaker 2

But somebody just ahead of me when he was trying to step off the boat, he dropped his rifle and after carrying it all that time but but then they, then they took this gear away from us. When we got over there and but we still had a big pack on.

00:20:28 Speaker 2

Her back.

00:20:30 Speaker 2

And.

00:20:32 Speaker 2

They walked us almost all the way across France and we would still had like close to 90 lbs.

00:20:39 Speaker 2

The pack and I noticed it.

00:20:42 Speaker 2

That guys was taking stuff out of their packs and just leaving it along the road. You know, the load was getting heavy, you know, oil after a while, I started doing that too. I started taking it up and and we strung. We strung our gear all the way from the English Channel, clear across France like that because they just couldn't. They're just too heavy.

00:21:02 Speaker 2

When we got there, we didn't know anything.

00:21:06 Speaker 1

He threw most of it away of your gear. What was the weather conditions like when you were walking across France that time of?

00:21:12 Speaker 2

Year it was, it was.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

Cold and snowy and and frozen ground and.

00:21:19 Speaker 2

I remember one time they said, well, you're going to get a hot meal tonight. Well, the hot meal consisted of a sea rash and boiling in water out here. You know, that was our hot meal. We thought we was going to get.

00:21:29 Speaker 2

A good.

00:21:30 Speaker 2

Meal Sea racing is A is a metal can and that's about so much about a pint or half a pint and it's condensed. It's processed food.

00:21:39 Speaker 2

Some kind like different things, you know.

00:21:43 Speaker 1

Will be some of the things that they would put throw into a sea rash and can.

00:21:47 Speaker 2

Well, like corned beef hash should be one of them, you know. Or maybe they might be pork cash or or or or beef Stew. Beef Stew is a was a bummer. That wasn't very much good, and but it wasn't like a maybe just a little over a pint.

00:22:03 Speaker 2

A food and that was a sea rash. And and it was olive green. And then they the cooks and start a fire out there and put a a a garbage can full of water and pour them things in there. And when they thought.

00:22:16 Speaker 2

They got up, that's what she.

00:22:19 Speaker 2

And then you was carrying a mist kit with the handle and your forks and spoons and stuff and inside. And then they'd have a another hot water over there where you supposed to dip that out on rinse your stuff while.

00:22:32 Speaker 2

9% of the people got diarrhea from that kind of eating anyhow.

00:22:38 Speaker 2

But a lot of lot of people.

00:22:43 Speaker 2

Say well, I can't stand the sight of a sea ration.

00:22:45

Yeah.

00:22:47 Speaker 2

To me, that was a luxury, because after I got up on the front, I never got anything hot. It was key rations, which was in a in a cardboard carton and and that was all cold food, you know. And there would be a little package in there with maybe 3 cigarettes and a little piece of toilet paper.

00:23:06 Speaker 2

And maybe a little chocolate bar and maybe a little cookie or some kind. And and then there'll be a can of processed food in there. You know, it's about similar as your sea rations, you know. But it was it was always cold.

00:23:21 Speaker 2

That's what we eat when, if we had them.

00:23:24 Speaker 1

How many days were were you on the road before you joined your outfit? From the time you landed in France, until you finally linked?

00:23:31 Speaker 1

Up with the 80th Division.

00:23:33 Speaker 2

I think I was on the front lines by the 28th of January when I left at the 8th.

00:23:39 Speaker 1

So you were three weeks on the road getting over?

00:23:41 Speaker 1

There too. And then, of course, the Bulls were still going on.

00:23:42 Speaker 2

Yeah, and it it took eight days to go over on the boat.

00:23:46 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:23:49 Speaker 2

I I've had things come into my mind. I wish I could verify them in some way, but.

00:23:55 Speaker 2

But as I as I relate my war history I.

00:23:59 Speaker 2

I think that the that I was I can't understand today why I my life was spared so many times when somebody right beside me lost there.

00:24:12 Speaker 2

And the first example of that was when we were going to sees going overseas at night. They'd let you come up.

00:24:18 Speaker 2

On the deck.

00:24:20 Speaker 2

And I'm up on the bow of the boat. I looked, and now nobody with me. I look out there and I see 2 white streaks coming right towards that ship, like 2 torpedoes.

00:24:34 Speaker 2

They wasn't jumping like fish or anything. There was 2 white streaks right at the waters Crest coming right towards that ship.

00:24:42 Speaker 2

I thought they was torpedoes and today I don't know what they was, but they certainly looked like torpedoes.

00:24:48 Speaker 2

And I I remember thinking, well, we always wonder where we're going to die. This is where I'm going to go. This is one of my. And then things come right towards and.

00:24:56 Speaker 2

Hit.

00:24:56 Speaker 2

The ship nothing happens.

00:24:59 Speaker 2

And I've talked to a Navy man about this one time, he said. Well, it's torpedoes. It sounds like torpedo fish jumps.

00:25:05 Speaker 2

But they was white and they run parallel one, just a little bit ahead of the other. And he said chances are they was.

00:25:10 Speaker 2

Ours, he said. We had a lot of duds.

00:25:14 Speaker 2

And as they say, I always wondered what that was, you know, whether it was really torpedoes or. But I definitely seen them, you know, man and I had no time to alert anybody because it's just a matter of seconds till you see him.

00:25:25 Speaker 2

Out there. There they were.

00:25:30 Speaker 2

I I really feel like that they was judged because.

00:25:35 Speaker 2

And they hit the the the bow of the ship, which is be about right at the they said they changed angles every 8 minutes to keep it. That took that long for Germans to to 0 in on you. Yeah. You zigzagged every 8 minutes. They changed courses. That's what they said.

00:25:48 Speaker 1

So you zigzag all the way across.

00:25:53

MHM.

00:25:54 Speaker 1

And the elder France, it was a big luxury liner. So they traveled alone in that, correct.

00:25:58 Speaker 2

Yeah, I travel alone nowhere. So no, we was all out there by ourself.

00:25:59 Speaker 1

No escorts. And you were out there.

00:26:01 Speaker 1

And.

00:26:03 Speaker 1

What that must have been an eerie feeling to see those things coming and.

00:26:06 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, it it it it. It was scary. I seen them things just out of the horizon coming right from and they was they was white, long cylinder type. Of course I can't verify without anybody. But I knew what happened, you know. And I always thought well, you know, I remember thinking this is it, you know this is it. I'm going to hear this was.

00:26:26 Speaker 2

Going to be it.

00:26:27 Speaker 2

But they didn't. Nothing happened.

00:26:32 Speaker 1

Are there anymore? Did you have it? Were.

00:26:34 Speaker 1

You ever seasick when?

00:26:34 Speaker 1

You went across to the coming back.

00:26:35 Speaker 2

Oh yes.

00:26:37 Speaker 2

I wanna I going overseas.

00:26:41 Speaker 2

I hope you got the stomach for this. Everybody on the ship got sick.

00:26:47 Speaker 2

Almost.

00:26:48 Speaker 2

I assume everybody does it. They threw up all over the floor. Everybody was throwing up all over the steel steps and you had to walk through all that. And I've always been a person. If somebody else thought if I'm going to throw up too in sympathy for them because I just can't stand it.

00:27:07 Speaker 2

The the UP chucks.

00:27:11 Speaker 2

Was probably two or three inches all over that ship.

00:27:15 Speaker 2

And even going to mess hall, everybody would fill up.

00:27:18 Speaker 2

Well, I I'd throw it up all over the place too, as long as everybody else. But then I finally did get up to the rail.

00:27:26 Speaker 2

And I started throwing up over a ship.

00:27:29 Speaker 2

And I got so sick I thought I'd die.

00:27:32 Speaker 2

And then later on, I wished I'd die because you just get the dry heaves. Nothing will come up and you just you just rip your stomach up, you know. And I thought about that over the years. I think I really believe that that railing and have been a little bit shorter that I was showing up. I just fell over because you just kept. So then I finally got over that.

00:27:54 Speaker 2

And.

00:27:56 Speaker 2

Then they cleaned up the place around there a little as much as you could, but you had to stay in your bunk all day. See, you couldn't allow everybody up on the on the deck at the same time. Then when I came back, you asked if I got sick.

00:28:10 Speaker 2

I remembered how I come back on a ship, but I don't remember what it was. I remembered how sick I got going over there, so I kind of was dreading that ride home when we got loaded up onto the ship.

00:28:23 Speaker 2

And we was kind of laying around out on the deck and some officer come up from the galley and said I need 3 volunteers. I want you, you and you. When he picked me, took me down the kitchen and said they peel some potatoes for dinner. They started peeling potatoes and I got to eating them raw potatoes and it didn't get sick. And I think that was a blessing because I didn't get sick and I don't was the raw potatoes, but I contributed to the raw potatoes and food in my stomach.

00:28:47 Speaker 2

And I wasn't crowded. I had the freedom of a kitchen to walk around, and there wasn't nobody bumping me and banging around and throwing up all over me or something like that, so I didn't get sick in the back.

00:28:58 Speaker 1

Quite an ordeal before he ever got into combat. Get so sick. Did you go through a repo? What they call Repo Depo replacement depot before you were assigned to the 80th Division?

00:29:00 Speaker 2

Right.

00:29:10 Speaker 2

Not, not really. I we just.

00:29:13 Speaker 2

We just walked and then suddenly we're there, you know, and.

00:29:18 Speaker 1

They didn't pick you out at the boat or he didn't go through a clearing house and say, OK, it went 10 minute to go to this.

00:29:21 Speaker 2

No, no, it would just, I suppose somebody and some officer or somebody designate who goes where. But I just know suddenly I'm there, you know, and.

00:29:35 Speaker 2

I I'd like to relate to you my first first night. Remember back I said I had only 12 weeks of actual training. I arrived on the front lines and it was almost dark and some guy I don't know who he was, hands me an Army 45.

00:29:54 Speaker 2

And he said, and we're in a hallway of a house with an outside entrance door there.

00:30:01 Speaker 2

He hands me an Army 45 and said we're going back here and try to get some rest tonight, he said. You stand guard. This is my first son, he said. You stand guard here and the password is something I don't remember.

00:30:13 Speaker 2

And he said if anybody approaches you, you ask.

00:30:17 Speaker 2

Him for halt.

00:30:18 Speaker 2

Give the password, he said. If they don't give the password, you shoot them.

00:30:23 Speaker 2

So here I've never had an Army 45 in my hand before. I had no training in an Army 45.

00:30:30 Speaker 2

But being a farm boy and raised his rifle and shooting snakes on the Creek, I kind of knew a little bit about guns and I figured out how to safe get the safety off. And I looked and see if there was a shell in the Chamber and how to get the safety of.

00:30:44 Speaker 2

So I spent the rest of that night trying to remember that password. I didn't want to dare forget that. And then I think, well, if they don't get the password, can I shoot him? If I got the nerve to shoot him, can I do this, you know?

00:30:56 Speaker 2

And and of course, there were nobody relieved me. They left me there all night long and.

00:31:04 Speaker 2

Long towards early morning, it was still dark.

00:31:08 Speaker 2

I hear this noise going pump.

00:31:10 Speaker 2

Trump.

00:31:11 Speaker 2

Clump, clump and it's getting louder all the time and I'm getting scared here all the time, you know? And I got the safety off on the gun, you know? And this always gets a little bit louder. And I'm just about ready to Holler, Hulk.

00:31:24 Speaker 2

And down the street someplace.

00:31:27 Speaker 2

Somebody hollers Hulk.

00:31:29 Speaker 2

And then clump, clump continued.

00:31:33 Speaker 2

And then to me, all hell broke loose. The machine gunner opened up.

00:31:39 Speaker 2

On this noise out there.

00:31:41 Speaker 2

And they put what they call a tracer bullet in like every 5 or 6 bullets. So at night you sit there, it gets a red fluorescent light. And then tell where they're shooting. Well, the whole street lights up with with, with tracer bullets. Machine gun just are rattling and chattering the way down there.

00:32:01 Speaker 2

And finally, the machine gun stops and I don't hear anymore noise.

00:32:04 Speaker 2

By that time, I'm petrified.

00:32:07 Speaker 2

When it gets daylight.

00:32:10 Speaker 2

I looked out there in the street and it was an old Jersey cow had walked down the street there and that's what that noise was and and come find out the tankers was sitting down at the other end of the street. They heard this noise. See two see and they opened up on it with this hit the galiber machine gun.

00:32:29 Speaker 2

Shot that cow all two piece.

00:32:32 Speaker 2

But I can remember the tankers when it got daylight. They come out there and they were slicing the quarters and the and the hand of the shoulders off of that and they were going.

00:32:41 Speaker 2

To have them.

00:32:41 Speaker 2

A good feast. But that old Jersey cow was just all shot up.

00:32:46 Speaker 1

What town or locality was this near when you first joined the division? Do you?

00:32:50 Speaker 1

Recall.

00:32:52 Speaker 1

But what country you were in? Maybe.

00:32:54 Speaker 1

That's.

00:32:55 Speaker 1

Maybe a more?

00:32:55 Speaker 2

I think I was in Austria, chechoslovakia that's about.

00:33:00 Speaker 1

Wait a minute, would have been that far.

00:33:01 Speaker 1

Would you in?

00:33:04 Speaker 1

In January in Czechoslovakia that early?

00:33:06 Speaker 2

Oh no, it was in Germany. It was in Germany. I could look at that map there. I could about to tell.

00:33:09 Speaker 1

You had gotten.

00:33:11 Speaker 2

You where?

00:33:11 Speaker 2

It was, but it was. It was in Germany. I never knew where I was and about, but when I made the map, when I was seeing sign up there, then I'd track it to that sign every time I could. It was it was.

00:33:13 Speaker 1

OK.

00:33:23 Speaker 2

In Germany.

00:33:23 Speaker 2

I'm sure this is towards the.

00:33:23 Speaker 1

OK.

00:33:24 Speaker 1

This.

00:33:25 Speaker 1

Tail end of the.

00:33:26 Speaker 1

The bulge campaign at the time you joined.

00:33:27

Yeah.

00:33:29 Speaker 2

Yeah, I was at the last of the balls when I got over. It was in the last of the.

00:33:34 Speaker 2

Yeah, that's right. And it was at the last the ball, wherever that was, that bastone bastone I was at bastone the last of it, not the first, but I was in the last of the mopping up at the last of the bastone. But they got me over there from the time it started. They was there.

00:33:48 Speaker 1

When the time was over, they were just then reducing the salient that have been surrounded.

00:33:52 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

00:33:52 Speaker 1

So they they were pushing them back.

00:33:54 Speaker 1

Towards the original line.

00:33:54 Speaker 2

Yeah, we were being pushed back at that time. That's. Yeah. It was passed on.

00:33:58 Speaker 2

I kind of forgot their from it was best and then.

00:34:03 Speaker 2

Then the next day, my second day. In fact, your first day in combat.

00:34:09 Speaker 2

Somehow or other I end up in a.

00:34:12 Speaker 2

Assigned to another fellow, I assume, and we are down in a bomb crater.

00:34:17 Speaker 2

And the Germans is off this way, and then they've got us pinned down and they're not moving. And we're not moving. And I I look out of this bomb crater and I see guys Slitherine across the ground like that on their, on their shoulders, and then they disappear down into a a ravine.

00:34:34 Speaker 2

And I watched him do that for a while, and then I asked his buddy, I said, what are they doing? What are they doing? He said, well, they're going. That bomb shelter, bomb crater. And they're filling their canteens for water out of water that's siphoned into this bomb crater. And I remember so well, I said, and no way. I'm going away and getting water out of that.

00:34:53 Speaker 2

Thing I'm drinking that kind of water.

00:34:56 Speaker 2

We were still pinned down the next day and I didn't rushing myself enough on water and I ran out of water and I was getting put at the.

00:35:04 Speaker 2

And I went over there and I went down in there and I filled my canteen with water.

00:35:10 Speaker 1

Right out of the.

00:35:10 Speaker 2

Crater just got out of the bum. Could have. And before before we got up on the front lines or sometime around the line.

00:35:18 Speaker 2

They issued us a a medicine bottle with I assumed chlorine tablets or something in and he said. When you run out of water and you have to fill it from the creeks or whatever, he said, put two of these tablets in there and shake them up and and then drink the water. Well. That time I did.

00:35:36 Speaker 2

But later on during the war, I'd ran out of water and I hadn't had any water for several days.

00:35:42 Speaker 2

And my lips was all swell, and I couldn't. I couldn't swallow, you know, and I would dry. And I finally come across water.

00:35:54 Speaker 2

And it was kind of stagnated type water that just accumulated in the in the dried upstream riverbed.

00:36:02 Speaker 2

And I hadn't had water for five days, and I was at thirsty.

00:36:07 Speaker 2

And I filled up my canteen. I popped two of the pills in my mouth. I was that thirsty and then drank the water.

00:36:14 Speaker 2

And then after I'd done it, I thought, my gosh, I'd probably kill myself now, but I didn't get sick of working. I've done it a few times after that.

00:36:23 Speaker 2

But you could get when you get that Thursday, you get pretty desperate, you know?

00:36:27 Speaker 1

All right.

00:36:28 Speaker 1

So you took the the tablets 1st and then drank the.

00:36:31 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah. I just popped two of them. Chlorine pills in my mouth and then and then drank the water.

00:36:40 Speaker 1

And see how this.

00:36:43 Speaker 1

Attempts to force the Wilts River on the 21st of January 45. I'm just reading the official history, the division boost, the head bridge, head over the Cliff River and the 317th cleared the Heights beyond hosting game HOSINGEN on 27th January 45 and you joined them. What the next day.

00:37:04 Speaker 2

Yeah, right in that area. Right in that area, I found that interesting because I found things in noon I didn't know, but.

00:37:05 Speaker 1

So imposing.

00:37:11 Speaker 1

OK. And the next day, the division took over the 4th Infantry Division Zone along the our river or over river. Oh, you are river.

00:37:11 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:37:19 Speaker 2

MHM.

00:37:20 Speaker 1

So this this goes on. So that's about the time when you join them.

00:37:23 Speaker 2

Yeah, about right in there.

00:37:26 Speaker 1

River, you were assigned at that point in time when you first joined them to company K as a Rifleman, and you stayed with the company. OK then.

00:37:31 Speaker 2

Uh-huh.

00:37:33 Speaker 2

Because I was always with something. OK, back in in Camp Hood, Texas. Being a former boy and used to a rifle, I shot expert infantryman down there and I got an expert infantry badge and I think my records caught up with me.

00:37:50 Speaker 2

Somebody seen that? This is what I think happened. Somebody seen that I was an expert infantry or a Rifleman, so I hadn't been there very long and somebody hands me a white.

00:38:02 Speaker 2

Slip on suit. It's this winter time and there's snow on the ground. It's a lightweight just to cover all type thing and they and they hand me a Springfield rifle with a big high-powered scope on it. And he said that said, now you're you're first count.

00:38:19 Speaker 2

And company sniper.

00:38:22 Speaker 2

And I'll never will forget what this man said to me, he said.

00:38:27 Speaker 2

He said, well, you're going to be first scout. And he said now companies snipers.

00:38:31 Speaker 2

He said if we withdraw.

00:38:35 Speaker 2

You and this is what stuck with me, he said. You stay there and you snipe at him as long as you can and get out if you can, and that's what he said to me.

00:38:48 Speaker 2

But then then I was. I was basically after that on the lead of the of the of the company. Whenever we moved out, I was putting there always on the point after that because I was scout. That's what they gave me the job. And that's what I've done.

00:39:05 Speaker 2

I have some comments here on General Patton. If you want to hear them.

00:39:08 Speaker 1

Absolutely.

00:39:10 Speaker 2

I would.

00:39:12 Speaker 2

I'd like to relate my first time and I seen General Patton. We was in a movement.

00:39:18 Speaker 2

Down the road in a Rd.

00:39:21 Speaker 2

Well, prior to that.

00:39:24 Speaker 2

Prior to that, this is my I hadn't been over there too long when we was in a movement down the road.

00:39:29 Speaker 2

And the word came. Somebody started to hollering aircraft. German aircraft.

00:39:36 Speaker 2

Well, I'm young and I'm dumb and I turn around in the road and I look and here comes this German air. Uh, aircraft after me at us.

00:39:46 Speaker 2

And he's a flying parallel, and I guess I'd seen too many movies or something, and I thought he can't shoot us. He have to dive down at, you know.

00:39:55 Speaker 2

Well, I'm standing in the road and looking at him and he opens up on me with his machine gun and he starts laying a pattern of bullets right about 25 feet behind me. They pass about 6 or 8 inches beside him and and go on about 50 feet down the road before he cuts them off. Well, by that time, I jump on the side dish.

00:40:16 Speaker 2

Which everybody else would.

00:40:21 Speaker 2

After that, after that, when everybody said aircraft, I was one of the first ones to decide this because I.

00:40:28 Speaker 2

It's just right down alongside me about 25 feet behind. He missed me about.

00:40:34 Speaker 2

The bullets right down alongside me stopped about 50 feet in front of me, let off on him, and then he went on down and on down. There were some guy.

00:40:41 Speaker 2

Took some pot shots at him with a rifle, of course.

00:40:44 Speaker 2

That, but anyway that was the same day that I met General Pat.

00:40:49 Speaker 2

We were still in convoy down this road of walking and we'd come down and said general patterns in the area going to be coming through here. He should break.

00:40:58 Speaker 2

Away from him.

00:41:00 Speaker 2

So a little bit later had generals are coming, you know? So we all broke off to the side of the road, you know, and we stand there and we're saluting as it goes by.

00:41:11 Speaker 2

This is this is now March. This is in March and.

00:41:16 Speaker 2

And General Patton comes down there, standing up in his Jeep.

00:41:20 Speaker 2

His pants you could shade with the creases in his pants. He boots his Polish. He had his 2 Pearl handled revolvers there and his helmet was shining and he's wearing an eye and our jacket with all these metals on.

00:41:31 Speaker 2

He just stepped out of by the band box.

00:41:35 Speaker 2

More or less.

00:41:38 Speaker 2

This is what a lot of people don't believe, but this is in.

00:41:41 Speaker 2

March.

00:41:42 Speaker 2

He's wearing all these nice, clean clothes and I'm wearing the same clothes that I left the United States with in January.

00:41:51 Speaker 2

I had two changes of clothes.

00:41:54 Speaker 2

From January till the end of the March into the end of the war in May.

00:42:02 Speaker 2

And.

00:42:03 Speaker 1

You'd have to rotate your socks, but you couldn't wash anything, could you?

00:42:05 Speaker 2

And you didn't wash anything. You didn't take anything off.

00:42:08 Speaker 1

Right. But you wouldn't change your socks, wouldn't.

00:42:10 Speaker 2

No. You know something to change it? You know? You know, we never took your shoes off. You got your shoes wet, you got wet. You just let them onto the.

00:42:18 Speaker 1

Well, some fellas did change socks every day. You.

00:42:20 Speaker 1

Know, they said, if you.

00:42:20 Speaker 2

Well, I I wasn't. I never had any salt. I don't never did do anything like.

00:42:24 Speaker 2

That.

00:42:25 Speaker 2

So then it wasn't long after that that I that I did get a change of clothes.

00:42:29 Speaker 2

And then then later on, along towards almost the last war in in like last April, I got another change of clothes.

00:42:38 Speaker 2

But.

00:42:40 Speaker 1

How many showers did you have or you know?

00:42:43 Speaker 1

Did you get chance?

00:42:44 Speaker 2

Oh no, there was none. I hadn't washed.

00:42:45 Speaker 1

Nothing he hadn't washed at all.

00:42:47 Speaker 2

I had work since January. We did get some wash when I changed clothes.

00:42:52 Speaker 2

In March, but there wasn't no shower. It was out of a steel helmet. I think you know.

00:42:53 Speaker 1

In March, that was your.

00:42:59 Speaker 1

They let you wash down. That's the first time in March.

00:43:01 Speaker 2

Yeah, in March, the second time was in in the last of April when I had another.

00:43:06 Speaker 2

Change of clothes.

00:43:07 Speaker 1

But no hot shower, just out of it.

00:43:09 Speaker 2

No, no, no, no, no. That child is no.

00:43:11 Speaker 2

No, quite and.

00:43:15 Speaker 2

I hesitate to tell this story, but I think it.

00:43:18 Speaker 2

Ought to be told.

00:43:19 Speaker 2

My wife says to tell her.

00:43:25 Speaker 2

Along towards the last summer before we got there, our my second change of clothes.

00:43:29 Speaker 2

We'd taken this small, like town and they always said you don't look nothing, you know, because the German booby trap these drawers and stuff well.

00:43:41 Speaker 2

I was in this bedroom there and I was looking. I was going through the dresses, but I'd been over there long enough then to know what to look for, to tell whether they was booby trapped or not.

00:43:53 Speaker 2

And I opened this dresser drawer and I find a pair of ladies silk pink panties in this drawer.

00:44:02 Speaker 2

And it just my size.

00:44:04 Speaker 2

And I think these are clean.

00:44:08 Speaker 2

And I took off my clothes and I set my underwear. In the corner, stood them in the corner, if you know what I'm saying. And I put those ladies silk pink panties on because they was clean. That's the only thing I.

00:44:20 Speaker 2

I had but the only thing was I wasn't thinking at the time and I didn't want to. I couldn't drop my drawers in front of the other men anymore.

00:44:28 Speaker 2

You know, because.

00:44:31 Speaker 2

And one of my buddies finally did see it. I had them on, but I can't remember putting them on or they was clean.

00:44:36 Speaker 2

They felt good.

00:44:41 Speaker 1

Did you have an overcoat to wear during those early months of 1945?

00:44:44 Speaker 2

I had, I had an overcoat for a while, but.

00:44:49 Speaker 2

And then when the weather warmed up and it just had a field jacket on, what they call a field jacket, it's a it's an army jacket with big, thick pockets in it. And you more or less lived out of that.

00:45:03 Speaker 2

Fuel jacket, you.

00:45:04 Speaker 2

You carried all your possessions in your side pockets and and all that, and you lived out that.

00:45:09 Speaker 2

Fuel jacket as long as well as carrying a couple of bandoliers of ammunition around you and plus having grenades stuck to you and that type of stuff.

00:45:18 Speaker 2

But then the.

00:45:20 Speaker 2

2nd.

00:45:22 Speaker 2

And then the second time I seen General Patton was a similar situation.

00:45:28 Speaker 2

Whereby they said fall aside, the general's coming through. This is long towards the latter part of the war. Well, by that time I'm getting pretty tired. And they said the generals are coming too, but we fell off to the side of the road. But that time spring was coming. You need to change it or something.

00:45:46 Speaker 1

It's about.

00:45:49 Speaker 1

This is towards the end of the war. Yeah, and the spring.

00:45:52 Speaker 2

Was coming. Spring wasn't coming and they said break aside. General Titans coming and I remember laying back on this bank and the sun was shining in my eyes and it was it was really feeling nice.

00:46:02 Speaker 2

And then pretty soon, they said the general's coming, you know, and I think to myself, he cannot be as tired as I am. There's no way he can be as tired as I am. I'm going to act like I'm asleep or or I'm not.

00:46:15 Speaker 2

Going to jump up and salute him.

00:46:17 Speaker 2

But as he come by, he was still dressed for your fancy and you can still see his full revolvers and his shiny helmet.

00:46:23 Speaker 2

But I just cocked one eye like that and looked at him because I said he just can't be as tired as I am.

00:46:31 Speaker 2

And then the third occasion I had experience with General Patton.

00:46:36 Speaker 2

I wasn't old enough to come home after the war when they went home on the point system and I didn't have enough points to come.

00:46:43 Speaker 2

Home.

00:46:44 Speaker 2

So I had to stay another year.

00:46:46 Speaker 2

Well, in the meantime, General Patton was killed in a command car, Jeep accident or something over there, and for some reason they chose me to be an honor guard at General Patton's funeral.

00:46:58 Speaker 2

Along with the representation of all the units over there and the road was lined for miles with double Rd. of people on each side of the road and for some reason I was stationed about 20 feet from the graveside.

00:47:11 Speaker 2

And we was out there like 2 hours before they come with the body and it was a cold, wet and miserable day.

00:47:18 Speaker 2

And of course, we had to stand there and I kept raising your feet. There wasn't a tension. By the time they come when the body and the mud was coming.

00:47:26 Speaker 2

Over the top of my combat boots.

00:47:28 Speaker 2

And his orderly.

00:47:31 Speaker 2

Slipped right there in front of me and they almost dropped him in the mud. Right, right there in front of me. I was told that that was the picture was on Live magazine, but I never did check it out.

00:47:42

But.

00:47:44 Speaker 2

That that was my third experience with General Patton, but.

00:47:48 Speaker 2

What was so impressive about the thing was he was buried in.

00:47:52 Speaker 2

Luxembourg, I believe it is.

00:47:56 Speaker 2

And you can look at figures.

00:47:58 Speaker 2

And you can say, well, they lost 50,000 men or they lost 30,000 or whatever.

00:48:04 Speaker 2

But I can remember standing in at that cemetery.

00:48:08 Speaker 2

He was buried approximately 50 feet or so from the road, which was flat.

00:48:14 Speaker 2

And then this cemetery went down a long slope in valley and up a hill like that. And then over the hill and down again. And then the sides just kind of sloped off something like.

00:48:26 Speaker 2

And I can remember standing there at that cemetery in as far as the eye could see.

00:48:32 Speaker 2

Was white cross. It's just perfect and it's far this way. And as far that way down the valley up.

00:48:38 Speaker 2

Then you get a. You get an impression of what they're talking about. 60,000 people or 50 or, you know.

00:48:45 Speaker 2

I never see the end of that cemetery. That day, the white crosses.

00:48:50 Speaker 2

And that that sticks in your mind.

00:48:52 Speaker 1

Including some fellows from the 80th Division and Daley? Yeah, they're buried there as well. Please. Probably some people you knew might have been in that cemetery.

00:49:01 Speaker 2

No.

00:49:04 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:49:06 Speaker 2

Want me to go home with?

00:49:07 Speaker 2

Some of my stuff here.

00:49:12 Speaker 2

Well, I'm a little behind on some of this, but.

00:49:17 Speaker 2

A lot of times we don't realize that that we lose men in basic training.

00:49:22 Speaker 2

We lost a man in basic training and I almost lost my life in basic training in Camp Hood, Texas.

00:49:30 Speaker 2

Uh.

00:49:31 Speaker 2

They they set up a machine gun.

00:49:35 Speaker 2

Training area where you crawl underwire. You know, while some guy stands back, every machine gun is shooting over your head and you don't jump up. You know, it's just to train you to shoot the fire over your head. But we had a guy got excited or something and he jumped up and he was killed that way. Then one day.

00:49:55 Speaker 2

That got us out there in the sandy area and they said.

00:50:00 Speaker 2

Dig a foxhole.

00:50:02 Speaker 2

And we're going to have a tank come and drive over the top of it. We want you experience what it's like to have a tank drive over the top here. So we all dug our foxholes and they would. They'd drag them in a line like that so he could just straddle everybody.

00:50:15 Speaker 2

Well, I happen to be the in man at this row of boxer.

00:50:19 Speaker 2

The tank driver turned too quick and as he did he, he flipped the dirt around and buried me.

00:50:26 Speaker 2

Right there in Texas.

00:50:29 Speaker 2

And the Sergeant apparently was aware smart enough to know there was a man missing. But what we've done, we got down in there and had our heads like this in the bottom of the hole, you know? And and the dirt. Well, anyway, he buried me and I couldn't get out. But I did have some air under my hand.

00:50:48 Speaker 2

And and fortunately they they they got me out before I but.

00:50:54 Speaker 2

I should have known dinner was going to be a long war and.

00:51:09 Speaker 2

The.

00:51:15 Speaker 2

You you're an Air Force man, right?

00:51:18 Speaker 2

I don't want to offend you in any way.

00:51:24 Speaker 2

We were, we were pinned down one time on this hilltop.

00:51:30 Speaker 2

And the Germans are over here on this one.

00:51:34 Speaker 2

We couldn't move, they couldn't move. We get up that potshot at us, they get up. We put shot at them.

00:51:42 Speaker 2

And and they couldn't get supplies up to us because they kept mortar in the backside of the hill, you know.

00:51:48 Speaker 2

And every day they kept saying, well, the Air Force is coming out tomorrow and they're going to bomb them off out hill or whatever.

00:51:56 Speaker 2

Well, we ran out of food.

00:51:59 Speaker 2

We didn't have anything to eat for five days.

00:52:02 Speaker 2

And every day, they said, well, the Air Force is coming out. Well, it was a.

00:52:07 Speaker 2

If something was wrong, they couldn't fly that day after the 5th day and we'd run out of food.

00:52:13 Speaker 2

Of course, we could get up at night and move around a little bit, but basically in the daytime there was two of us in the foxhole.

00:52:21 Speaker 2

And imagine laying in a foxhole with another man all day long.

00:52:25 Speaker 2

And then we'd get bored at that. While we we'd turn around and just be shoot over on that other eldest to have something to do, you know? And hoping we did something and they did the same thing, I'm sure. But anyway, after fifth day and we hadn't had.

00:52:38 Speaker 2

Any.

00:52:38 Speaker 2

Food for we had very little food and they ran out the first day and win the 5th day finally.

00:52:45 Speaker 2

They said the Air Force is coming out today and knock them off that hill over there.

00:52:51 Speaker 2

Well.

00:52:54 Speaker 2

Pretty soon I heard the drone of motors and I looked up and there is airplanes coming.

00:53:01 Speaker 2

This body that that I'm in this hole with.

00:53:05 Speaker 2

He jumps up and he's waving her. Yeah. Yeah, good boy.

00:53:11 Speaker 2

They cut loose with a machine gun and they killed him.

00:53:16 Speaker 2

The machine gunning that went. I'm standing up too.

00:53:20 Speaker 2

It peppered right in front of my feet about that far.

00:53:24 Speaker 2

Hit him in the feet. Put nine holes in him for another's head.

00:53:29 Speaker 2

And he's standing up there, waving at her, and then they shoot him down.

00:53:34 Speaker 2

And there was like, four or five of these aircraft and they're stretching.

00:53:37 Speaker 2

The whole hill.

00:53:39 Speaker 2

And they killed a couple of more men over there. You know, I think it was. And wounded two or three more. Well, then somebody.

00:53:46 Speaker 2

Had they, they got a flare up in the air.

00:53:51 Speaker 2

And then they got over on the German side.

00:53:54 Speaker 1

Killed by friendly fire. Yeah, three boys out of your.

00:53:58 Speaker 1

Company.

00:53:59 Speaker 1

That you know of and several wounded.

00:54:02 Speaker 2

They had red noses on them. I heard later that they was French driven American flying air American planes. I'm not. I don't know where that's true or not, but I can see their red noses and.

00:54:16 Speaker 2

They cut him down. Just just.

00:54:20 Speaker 2

You know, and that's.

00:54:20 Speaker 1

With the Flying Mustangs, do you think?

00:54:22 Speaker 2

I don't know if they were.

00:54:24 Speaker 2

Fighter plane to some kind of a small you know? I mean, they were bombers on.

00:54:25 Speaker 1

Some.

00:54:28 Speaker 2

Them but.

00:54:29 Speaker 2

But he's waving at them.

00:54:31 Speaker 2

And they'd cut him down.

00:54:33 Speaker 2

Nine holes.

00:54:35 Speaker 2

Right across my toes, he was just 10 inches in front of Maine.

00:54:42 Speaker 1

Now, that wasn't the 1st man you saw killed though, was it? Was that the first man you ever saw killed?

00:54:48 Speaker 2

Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no, but that.

00:54:48 Speaker 1

That this is later on or.

00:54:54 Speaker 2

That's the one that stuck.

00:54:55 Speaker 2

With me, yeah.

00:54:57 Speaker 2

Then.

00:55:01 Speaker 2

Like I told you earlier, I'm not a water person. I'm basically kind of afraid of water.

00:55:07 Speaker 2

And we spearheaded to the Rhine River.

00:55:14 Speaker 2

And I thought we were going to cross the Rhine River. My particular people. Well, I'm scared all the time about crossing this Rhine River because I'm not brave around water.

00:55:26 Speaker 2

They back us up, put us on the truck, move us down 5 or 6 miles or something. And we did it a second time.

00:55:33 Speaker 2

And I'm frightened to death that time.

00:55:36 Speaker 2

Most of the water.

00:55:39 Speaker 2

It backed us up plus on trucks and we had to do that three times.

00:55:43 Speaker 2

Before we cross the Ryan River.

00:55:47 Speaker 2

And.

00:55:49 Speaker 2

I had seen men.

00:55:51 Speaker 2

Get this premonition, but this was their last day.

00:55:55 Speaker 2

They're not going to make it anymore.

00:55:58 Speaker 2

And and they generally didn't. They had these premonitions. I don't know what caused it, but they do.

00:56:04 Speaker 2

Well, I when I first got overseas, I got me a.

00:56:09 Speaker 2

A little wind up clock about so big around 3 or 4 inch dial and there were red and had a wind up, you know 8 gig clock kind of a deal and I carried it in my field and a lot of boys knew I had.

00:56:23 Speaker 2

And.

00:56:24 Speaker 2

They'd holler up, I said. Ice window. What time it is and I'd pull up this thing and I'd hold them up, you know, and see what time it was so everybody knew I had this.

00:56:34 Speaker 2

But this is one of the few times that we stayed with a roof over our head. And by the way, from January to may, I expect I could be less than 10 times I ever had a roofer. They slept with a rifle on my head, but the rest of the time I was in a hole in the ground out here.

00:56:50 Speaker 2

So that morning we didn't get to stay in and I'm taking this little clock off and set it in a little stand.

00:56:56 Speaker 2

There, but where I slept that night.

00:56:58 Speaker 2

And I got up the next morning and I think it was a fear of this water.

00:57:03 Speaker 2

I couldn't make myself pick up that clock.

00:57:06 Speaker 2

I thought this is it, I don't. I know I'm going to need that after today and I couldn't. I couldn't.

00:57:12 Speaker 2

Make myself pick.

00:57:13 Speaker 2

Up clock up and I went out there without it and we got down the street and getting ready to dance on out.

00:57:20 Speaker 2

And somebody said, what time is it now? I don't know. But wait, your call.

00:57:27 Speaker 2

Except there I I don't. I'm not gonna need that today. Well, I'll go get it for you.

00:57:31 Speaker 2

No, no, I couldn't take that clock with me.

00:57:36 Speaker 2

We crossed the Rhine River.

00:57:39 Speaker 2

And when we got on the other side, Massino was still alive.

00:57:45 Speaker 2

I found another prop to carry, but that's the only time I had the premonition that I wasn't going to make it through there.

00:57:52 Speaker 2

Now when we crossed the Rhine River.

00:57:55 Speaker 2

We got what we call aerial burst.

00:57:58 Speaker 2

That's where the explodes in the air. And the more and the shell fragments all splattered on the water.

00:58:05 Speaker 2

We didn't lose anybody, but we had two or three fellows wounded.

00:58:09 Speaker 2

And that's the only time during the whole war that I ever encountered aerial bursts where they completely blew up in the air and splattered over.

00:58:18 Speaker 2

I just bugged me for 50 years. Why we only got aerial bursts Over The Rhine River.

00:58:25 Speaker 2

And when I was in Buchenwald this last April.

00:58:29 Speaker 2

I talked to one of the officers in the artillery group.

00:58:34 Speaker 2

That in the artillery and he was a an officer.

00:58:38 Speaker 2

And I questioned him about it. I said, how come I only got aerial bursts from the Germans on the Rhine River?

00:58:47 Speaker 2

Now he looked at me and he slowed a little bit and he.

00:58:51 Speaker 2

He said, well, he said, you know, the Germans, they have to shoot in the woods and hit a tree and then it will blow down on you. And I said, yeah, I've been through all that. I know all about that.

00:59:01 Speaker 2

And then he hesitated, he said. Well, we're the only ones that.

00:59:04 Speaker 2

Can do that.

00:59:06 Speaker 2

I said. And you're saying you probably shelled me Over The Rhine River and you said yeah.

00:59:12 Speaker 2

For some reason I never got it any other time because artillery was off.

00:59:17 Speaker 2

And they shelled us Over The Rhine River.

00:59:19 Speaker 1

Is this like a proximity fuse or some kind?

00:59:22 Speaker 2

Of fuse.

00:59:22 Speaker 2

He said he explained it to me. He said it's it's, it's they have a timer in there.

00:59:29 Speaker 2

And some electronic system that when when it gets so close to the ground, it picks up the ground signal and goes back to the timer and it'll blow up in the air.

00:59:40 Speaker 2

That's the way it works.

00:59:42 Speaker 1

Must be like a proximity type device. Yeah, we only we had that the Germans did. So that was the friendly fire.

00:59:44 Speaker 2

Yeah, 1.

00:59:50 Speaker 2

Yeah. Again, again, I've got it.

00:59:55 Speaker 2

And that's the only time you know. It bugged me for 50 years. Why? It's the only time the Germans ever fired. And he said we're the only ones then said they have to hit the trees and then the splitter and I said I know all about them. I've been going through that.

01:00:10 Speaker 2

So.

01:00:11 Speaker 1

Were you ever wounded?

01:00:13 Speaker 1

Or you just incredibly fortunate, I think.

01:00:15 Speaker 1

That I didn't know what her.

01:00:17 Speaker 2

I've been wounded, but not official.

01:00:21 Speaker 2

Not officially. I didn't turn myself in. I didn't do anything about it, but.

01:00:30 Speaker 2

This this 80th Division thing that you told me.

01:00:34 Speaker 2

That you gave me my. I read that the other night. There's only one one day.

01:00:40 Speaker 2

One day during the war that I remember a date.

01:00:46 Speaker 2

And it's March the 13th.

01:00:48 Speaker 2

And it mentions March the 13th. Of course. I had no idea what was going on during the war. You know, I just was.

01:00:54 Speaker 2

There.

01:00:55 Speaker 2

And.

01:00:56 Speaker 2

They mentioned March the 13th.

01:00:59 Speaker 2

Yeah.

01:01:00 Speaker 1

Yes.

01:01:01 Speaker 2

On the night of the 12th and I've always.

01:01:05 Speaker 2

Remember March the 13th? Every year since this and.

01:01:08 Speaker 2

It.

01:01:09 Speaker 2

But on the on the night of the 12th.

01:01:14 Speaker 2

We had a perimeter line set up where we dug in the foxholes and what you do if you've got, if you're in there by yourself, like like you stand guard here from just so many hours and then you get this guy up and he you sleep a little bit and he gets up, you know. And that's the way.

01:01:30 Speaker 2

You operate, you know and.

01:01:35 Speaker 2

I was. I didn't. I didn't sleep hardly anymore any. You know, if you did, it was just catnaps.

01:01:42 Speaker 2

But anyway, Mike Turner, guy woke me up and watching and and I was then in the foxhole, but awake and listening.

01:01:54 Speaker 2

I heard a shuffle down off to my right side down there, someplace on down in there and I didn't know what it was.

01:02:02 Speaker 2

But there was. I couldn't see anything. I just heard some noises down there.

01:02:09 Speaker 2

We got about two inches of snow that night.

01:02:13 Speaker 2

And then later on, somebody else just standing guard. And then when I got up out of my hole the next morning, I remember throwing the blanket off with about two inches of snow on.

01:02:24 Speaker 2

And I took it down that way to see what was going on. There was actually another company down there.

01:02:35 Speaker 2

The Germans had slipped through the line sometime that night and they cut the throats of four fellows down there, cut their throats.

01:02:43 Speaker 2

And I could remember the Crimson Snow.

01:02:48 Speaker 2

Down there and it bugged me for years. Or maybe I could have done something if I had known, but I didn't know anything was going on.

01:02:56

Yes.

01:02:58 Speaker 2

That happened on the 12th.

01:03:01 Speaker 2

Before the 13th, then, then later that morning, we assembled that kind of a a group in the area there and I think we got a little bit of something to eat that day and.

01:03:15 Speaker 2

Then like I said, I was first.

01:03:17 Speaker 2

Out.

01:03:19 Speaker 2

And so they sent me in, and I generally led the patrol.

01:03:23 Speaker 2

And I can remember so well. There's a long slope hill going up there like that.

01:03:30 Speaker 2

And I led the group to the top of that hill and there was another fellow with me.

01:03:36 Speaker 2

North Carolina.

01:03:40 Speaker 2

The Germans are good.

01:03:42 Speaker 2

They knew what they were doing with Marty.

01:03:45 Speaker 2

They let me get to the top of the hill and of course the hill was lined with men all the way back.

01:03:51 Speaker 2

Down to.

01:03:51 Speaker 2

The.

01:03:52 Speaker 2

Staging area back, Sir.

01:03:55 Speaker 2

They let the they let me get to the top and they dropped the first mortar shell on me.

01:04:01 Speaker 2

And then they they sprinkled that road all the way down that hill. They knew artist. They set it right down on that road. Ever want them then they need.

01:04:10 Speaker 2

They slaughtered them.

01:04:12 Speaker 2

They slaughtered us that.

01:04:13 Speaker 2

Day.

01:04:15 Speaker 2

They knocked me out.

01:04:17 Speaker 2

And.

01:04:18 Speaker 2

I come too later.

01:04:22 Speaker 2

My buddy is laying there on the ground. He's.

01:04:26 Speaker 2

His face up, I think I knew it was.

01:04:29 Speaker 2

Our side.

01:04:31 Speaker 2

I got a dent in my helmet. The size of my fist.

01:04:36 Speaker 2

I got scratches all over my hand was artillery shrapnel. The rifle I'm carrying is laying there on the ground.

01:04:44 Speaker 2

All the wood is completely splintered off of it.

01:04:49 Speaker 2

The Cantina hole and back here my little water jug. It's it's shattered. All my water's gone.

01:04:58 Speaker 2

And.

01:05:00 Speaker 2

I turned my buddy over to see what's wrong with him.

01:05:05 Speaker 2

And I turned him on his face. And there on his back.

01:05:09 Speaker 2

You'd like you'd taken a giant ice cream scoop.

01:05:13 Speaker 2

And a piece of artillery fragment took a scoop out of his lung like that.

01:05:19 Speaker 1

His loan.

01:05:20 Speaker 2

Took his scoop out of his lung out of his back, out of his back. His back bones. His rib cage.

01:05:22

There was one that was back.

01:05:28 Speaker 2

Was as smooth as a table. This like that.

01:05:33 Speaker 2

And I remember looking in there and seeing these lungs pulsate. And I thought, well, he's still alive.

01:05:40 Speaker 2

He's still alive.

01:05:42 Speaker 2

And.

01:05:45 Speaker 2

They give you what they call a little first aid kit. It's only about 3 inches by two inches. It clips on your belt and about all you could do is bend your little finger with it or something like that.

01:05:56 Speaker 2

And he's got a hole in his.

01:05:57 Speaker 2

Back.

01:05:59 Speaker 2

That's bigger than as big as my fist. You're bigger. And I'm thinking I got to get.

01:06:05 Speaker 2

That plugged up somehow. He's not both shouldn't be sucking his air. And if you're going to live.

01:06:11 Speaker 2

And.

01:06:13 Speaker 2

I got to back up just a little bit to finish this story.

01:06:17 Speaker 2

Before I went overseas.

01:06:21 Speaker 2

My sister gave me a big first aid kit, had lots of stuff in it.

01:06:26 Speaker 2

And I told you about throwing stuff away. Coming up through France.

01:06:30 Speaker 2

I looked at that first aid kit. I don't know how many times and I started to throw it away. It bothered me when she gave it to me back in United States.

01:06:38 Speaker 2

And when I was throwing stuff away to relieve my load, I looked that first.

01:06:41 Speaker 2

Aid.

01:06:41 Speaker 2

Kit and I'm going to throw it away because I think I don't.

01:06:44 Speaker 2

Need this and.

01:06:45 Speaker 2

I never could throw it away. I never throw it away. And as the load got heavier, I came onto that first aid kit.

01:06:51 Speaker 2

And I still had it in my field jacket that day that my buddy got his back scooped out.

01:06:57 Speaker 2

Well, it had big bandages there, so I used that first aid kit. Everything in it to plug that hole and used his little kit and my little kit.

01:07:07 Speaker 2

To get that air plugged off of him.

01:07:11 Speaker 2

And then.

01:07:13 Speaker 2

Things was really.

01:07:18 Speaker 2

My wife. Alright, that's alright.

01:07:22 Speaker 2

Things were really disoriented that day and.

01:07:25 Speaker 2

I I knew everybody down behind me pretty well gone.

01:07:30 Speaker 2

And I see two German soldiers off in the area. They were wanting to surrender. They were engaged too.

01:07:39 Speaker 2

I go over there and I get these two German soldiers, but I take their rifle the bullets out of their rifles. I'll make them bring their rifles back.

01:07:46 Speaker 2

I made a a stretcher out of this boys blanket and my blanket with these rifles and I had these two Germans carrying back down the hill.

01:07:55 Speaker 2

That there was still a mortar man over there, and every time we'd start down that hill, he'd drop a mortar in on us.

01:08:02 Speaker 2

And after about four or five times, the Germans refused to get up and carry him anymore. They wasn't going to do it anymore.

01:08:10 Speaker 2

I fired two or three shots at their feet and then I pointed at their head to indicate that that's what the next one was going to be, you know.

01:08:18 Speaker 2

Well, they got back up then and then we got him back.

01:08:20 Speaker 2

Down the hill, but.

01:08:23 Speaker 2

But just.

01:08:25 Speaker 2

Like I said, we took such a slaughtering that day.

01:08:28 Speaker 2

The side ditches actually had blood running in them.

01:08:32 Speaker 2

The where they ran off the road and.

01:08:36 Speaker 2

That's that's about the worst I've ever seen.

01:08:39 Speaker 1

How many men do you think was lost that day? Do you have any idea?

01:08:43 Speaker 2

Oh, I don't know. They table. We had three company commanders that day and I only knew two of them. I never even.

01:08:50 Speaker 2

We were just almost annihilated that day. We got him back down to the bottom of the hill, put him in an egg camp.

01:08:58 Speaker 2

But the prisoners in a.

01:09:00 Speaker 2

In a.

01:09:02 Speaker 2

And a camp for them and I.

01:09:03 Speaker 2

Got a little food?

01:09:05 Speaker 2

And then I went back and I never seen that game again. But.

01:09:10 Speaker 2

To my mother and his mother and I found out that he did live. He lost that lung. He lives out in North Carolina now.

01:09:19 Speaker 2

But he did live.

01:09:21 Speaker 1

He saved his life, no doubt. If he hadn't been there to.

01:09:24 Speaker 2

Yeah, but, but.

01:09:25 Speaker 2

Here's, of course it's only name thing.

01:09:28 Speaker 2

But my sister's name is Teresa.

01:09:32 Speaker 2

And I always said my sister Teresa saved his life because I carried the first aid kit that she gave me.

01:09:41 Speaker 1

If it had been.

01:09:41 Speaker 2

She's not a nun or anything, but she is. My is my sister Teresa.

01:09:47 Speaker 1

So if you hadn't.

01:09:49 Speaker 1

Thought about sending that kit? He probably wouldn't have made it.

01:09:52 Speaker 2

Probably never.

01:09:53 Speaker 1

Says the division attacked the Waldern Forest on 13 March 1945, WADERN and fought the Battle of Vice Kirchen WEISKIRCHE.

01:10:08 Speaker 1

And.

01:10:10 Speaker 1

And it says we're a battalion as the 318th Infantry Regiment was isolated. Your sister's regiment, 1415 March 45. But essentially that battle that took place on the 13th was the battle of what they called life. Kirchen vice kirchen. And that's and and your company.

01:10:16 Speaker 2

Yeah.

01:10:27 Speaker 2

I never knew what it was.

01:10:30 Speaker 1

Really.

01:10:31 Speaker 2

You see, you see, I know this is basically this literature. Here on it is basically true.

01:10:31

Shut up.

01:10:39 Speaker 2

But it's not precise. Precise because we we would intercross and they'd get ahead of us or they'd get mixed, you know, and basically what they're saying, but it's not.

01:10:49 Speaker 1

Not precisely what you did.

01:10:50 Speaker 2

That's the line. Yeah, because I know sometimes we'd run into the 318th over here and we'd both be there and and they'd be mixed and we'd have our lines crossed and intercrossing and that kind of stuff. Say. So what? They where they say the 318th was. Or they may have been there, but they may have some over here.

01:11:07 Speaker 2

Too, you know, I mean that's just that's just the way it was.

01:11:10 Speaker 1

But it's in that general area.

01:11:11 Speaker 2

Yeah, right. Right. Yeah.

01:11:12 Speaker 1

Somebody were to find it on the map that happened.

01:11:14 Speaker 1

On that particular.

01:11:15 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

01:11:15 Speaker 1

Day.

01:11:16 Speaker 1

And.

01:11:17 Speaker 1

All I wanted to ask you before we move on ahead. When did you get rid of your that white coverall outfit that you wore as a scout?

01:11:26 Speaker 2

In probably two or three weeks, it was still winter time and I got the the the crosshairs on the on the scope got washed out or something. They got damaged and I lost the cross Arizona. So I threw that down, picked up on them one and at the same time as.

01:11:29 Speaker 1

The water.

01:11:45 Speaker 2

Didn't have any snow at that time and I looked for the person.

01:11:48 Speaker 2

Conspicuous running around in a white suit. So I dumped the white suit, ran the crosshairs, went out of my life. But I was still first scouted all the time at that time.

01:11:59 Speaker 1

As scout, did you have any radio communication or we just have to?

01:12:02 Speaker 2

No.

01:12:02 Speaker 1

Ask the runner to run back.

01:12:03 Speaker 2

No, I had. I had no radio or anything like that.

01:12:06 Speaker 1

Good morning.

01:12:07 Speaker 2

Ohh.

01:12:11 Speaker 1

That that the orders remain the same, that if you got cut off, you were to stay there and fight.

01:12:11 Speaker 2

Uh.

01:12:16 Speaker 1

As long as you could and then try to withdraw, if you could.

01:12:19 Speaker 2

If you get out, if you can, I'll try to get out if you can.

01:12:27 Speaker 2

We we moved at night occasionally.

01:12:32 Speaker 2

And.

01:12:34 Speaker 2

Reconnaissance, which is supposed to be.

01:12:38 Speaker 2

Guys like me, but only there are one complete outfit that's supposed to just do that anyway. Reconnaissance told us one night.

01:12:47 Speaker 2

They're nothing out that way, and I never did believe that them guys ever done anything would go to the edge of town, look on them. They didn't see anything.

01:12:53 Speaker 2

That come back said enough.

01:12:54 Speaker 2

To know that.

01:12:56 Speaker 2

But.

01:12:57 Speaker 2

But I wanted to relate this story. Tell you out.

01:13:03 Speaker 2

They.

01:13:04 Speaker 2

We were moving at night and it was kind of a moonlight type night.

01:13:10 Speaker 2

And.

01:13:12 Speaker 2

The horror of a Rifleman.

01:13:15 Speaker 2

Is to have to cross bare ground, and then there's a woods over there because they can be encamped in that woods and you can't see them in the horror of an infant. They have to cross this bare ground.

01:13:25 Speaker 2

And go into that ruins.

01:13:27 Speaker 2

But then, reconnaissance has said there's basically nothing out there to boys tonight. So we're we're we're gonna move down the road.

01:13:36 Speaker 2

But what it was?

01:13:37 Speaker 2

The German artillery was encamped in this woods over there.

01:13:42 Speaker 2

And we're almost right on him. We surprised him, I'm sure.

01:13:47 Speaker 2

And an artilleryman.

01:13:50 Speaker 2

He's generally back at least a half a mile or so, and he projects his shell up here and it drops out here 1/2 to a mile away.

01:13:59 Speaker 2

We're so close to them. They lowered their guns and point and shot point blank at us.

01:14:06 Speaker 2

No projection just right in the ground right out of.

01:14:11 Speaker 2

And they just hit us with everything.

01:14:16 Speaker 2

And.

01:14:17 Speaker 2

The road was elevated. The road bed was elevated like 8 inches, maybe or 10.

01:14:24 Speaker 2

Well, this thing to do, which is what I've done, I got on the off side.

01:14:28 Speaker 2

Of the road.

01:14:31

But.

01:14:33 Speaker 2

They're shooting this artillery at us point blank.

01:14:37 Speaker 2

And the shrapnels are going off there like this.

01:14:41 Speaker 2

I'm laying on the off side of this.

01:14:43 Speaker 2

Rd.

01:14:44 Speaker 2

And it's only 8 inches of clearance, approximately. And this shrapnel is cutting my shreds out of my jacket. That's how close I am.

01:14:54 Speaker 2

But it's missing me.

01:14:56 Speaker 2

And you know what I've done? I ripped my shirt open. I've ripped my field jacket open. I ripped my shirt open.

01:15:03 Speaker 2

Trying to get just a little bit closer to the ground because the shells are ripping my shirt at them.

01:15:10 Speaker 2

And then I realized there's a cobalt pipe over there, and the next thing I know, I'm trying to crawl in an.

01:15:15 Speaker 2

8 inch cobert pipe.

01:15:18 Speaker 2

And this is the only time during the war that I had, they didn't say, retreat, they said draw back.

01:15:25 Speaker 2

It's the only time during the war that I ever heard drawback.

01:15:28 Speaker 2

Well, when that word comes through, we kept up and ran for it.

01:15:33 Speaker 2

But a lot of guys had already left.

01:15:37 Speaker 2

When the first shells.

01:15:39 Speaker 2

And where they went? I don't know. I've never seen them again. And then where they go, never, ever found them. Never, ever come back. They was either smart or they still run. I.

01:15:49 Speaker 2

Don't know which.

01:15:51 Speaker 2

Never come back. Finally would come back to retreat and and then when we got back all and we got regrouped again.

01:15:58 Speaker 2

But I was laying my bare skin on the ground, trying. I ripped the buttons off. I was in them damn buttons on them. I'm pulling the buttons off.

01:16:06 Speaker 2

Trying.

01:16:06 Speaker 2

To get closer.

01:16:07 Speaker 2

To the ground just to get that much lower because it's ripping.

01:16:10 Speaker 2

My pack off.

01:16:13 Speaker 1

Did you ever find out what kind of artillery is being fired at you?

01:16:16 Speaker 2

No, I don't know what it was.

01:16:17 Speaker 1

Of course, the.

01:16:18 Speaker 1

88 was the most ferocious weapon.

01:16:20 Speaker 1

The most feared weapon they had.

01:16:21 Speaker 2

Yeah.

01:16:24 Speaker 2

I made a I made a list here of the type of weapons that we were. We were up against.

01:16:32 Speaker 2

They had what they called a screaming Mimi, which I think was the A.

01:16:36 Speaker 2

8.

01:16:37 Speaker 2

And that thing would make us scream a noise as it comes through the air. And when it hit, it was bad, you know, and and then you could hear it. It's scary to death. What killed you? You know, because it just screamed like a woman or something, screaming through the night.

01:16:52 Speaker 2

Then they had what they called the burp gun. It was a fully automatic gun. It wasn't very accurate, but it was fast.

01:17:02 Speaker 2

And they'd shoot at your feet with that.

01:17:05 Speaker 2

Because the the philosophy of it, they couldn't hold it and just go up in the air like that. See, it has shots so fast, has so much.

01:17:13 Speaker 2

Velocity. Just shoot up in the air.

01:17:15 Speaker 2

They'd shoot at your feet.

01:17:17 Speaker 2

If they hit a man on his feet, he had 9 bullet holes in it as it went up him and we feared that thing's bad too. But they had a lot of them, but it wasn't acre, but.

01:17:26 Speaker 2

If they hit you, yeah.

01:17:31 Speaker 2

And then, of course, they had the motor shells, and then the artillery, and then somewhere up in the mountains they had a big, huge gun that they'd roll out. I found out later that was on tracks, and you may have heard about it. It rolled out thing out of a cave up in the mountain and then fire that thing at night or something. And boy, you just rumble all the world.

01:17:51 Speaker 2

And I think the Air Force finally got that thing, and that thing would that was ferocious. I mean, I never had it hit real close to me, but the noise of that thing would definitely.

01:18:01 Speaker 1

You know they're super gun.

01:18:02 Speaker 2

Yeah, and it was on a rail car or something up in the mountain on a flat car.

01:18:07 Speaker 2

And then, of course, they had they had mines, land mines which.

01:18:14 Speaker 2

Occasionally, but not not all that bad because I don't think they had time to set them too much and.

01:18:22 Speaker 2

Then then I got down here. One of the reasons that I don't hear today, which I've never got any compensation for it, but that's besides the point.

01:18:32 Speaker 2

But I had the misfortune of being involved in.

01:18:40 Speaker 2

The Germans abandoned these ammunition dumps. They abandoned the ammunition dump. They couldn't move it fast enough and get out of the way because we was pushed. They abandoned the ammunition dump. But they did take time to sabotage it.

01:18:52 Speaker 2

And the first one we took, we got in there and nibbling around, looking at all boy, well, we've really done something here and they sabotaged that thing. They started going off an ammunition dump and then, oh, I had just blew Everything Everywhere. You know, it didn't. They just noise as much as anything because of the.

01:19:12 Speaker 2

The shelves would erupt, you know, but they wouldn't project too much, but.

01:19:17 Speaker 2

And then then we wasn't too smart. They did it to us twice, and then two ammunition dumps and.

01:19:21 Speaker 2

Blew it up like that.

01:19:23 Speaker 1

Did that affect your hearing there?

01:19:24 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, I didn't. I the day that happened. I didn't hear anything for two or three days the first time.

01:19:31 Speaker 1

Was this close to the end?

01:19:32 Speaker 1

Of the war, when those.

01:19:33 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, they was running, you know, on.

01:19:35 Speaker 1

It's doing sabotaging the dumps to keep them.

01:19:38 Speaker 1

From falling into your hands.

01:19:38 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

01:19:41 Speaker 2

A lot of.

01:19:43 Speaker 2

A lot of.

01:19:47 Speaker 2

People don't know what goes to.

01:19:49 Speaker 2

A soldiers mind like dying.

01:19:52 Speaker 2

How would you ever have anybody tell you?

01:19:56 Speaker 2

Well.

01:19:59 Speaker 2

A lot of soldiers, when they die or they know they're dying or they they are dying, they'll call out their mother's name or their wives name.

01:20:10 Speaker 2

And this.

01:20:11 Speaker 2

Rips your heart out.

01:20:14 Speaker 2

And on this one occasion, and I'm going to tell you about.

01:20:18 Speaker 2

The Cardinal we were, we were in a sparsely wooded area.

01:20:25 Speaker 2

That the Germans would be dropping artillery in on us. Just real bad martyrs and artillery.

01:20:32 Speaker 2

And.

01:20:34 Speaker 2

The Cardinal rule is that that if you've got a foxhole and they're all shelling you, you don't get.

01:20:39 Speaker 2

Out of the hole.

01:20:41 Speaker 2

You don't get out of the hole. You know you stay in there if you long.

01:20:44 Speaker 2

As you're in.

01:20:45 Speaker 2

The hole, and if it don't hit you directly, the the shell projections is up like this, so you won't get hit, but it's if you're in the hole, your role as reliable, as safe as you can be, unless it drops in the hole.

01:20:58 Speaker 2

But they were shelling was pretty bad and and a a boy up on up a little bit further had been hit.

01:21:07 Speaker 2

And he starts calling for his mother.

01:21:10 Speaker 2

She's calling mother. Help me. Mom, help me.

01:21:16 Speaker 2

Here.

01:21:18 Speaker 2

I I couldn't take it any longer.

01:21:22 Speaker 2

And.

01:21:23 Speaker 2

I jumped up to go to help him.

01:21:26 Speaker 2

And there was a guy there named Sergeant Robbie.

01:21:30 Speaker 2

He apparently couldn't take it anymore either.

01:21:33 Speaker 2

And he jumped up. We both violated the rules.

01:21:36 Speaker 2

And he jumped up.

01:21:40 Speaker 2

Well, an artillery shall come in and that lip close to him.

01:21:46 Speaker 2

And it completely decapitated his head.

01:21:49 Speaker 2

And his body fell forward.

01:21:52 Speaker 2

And his head and helmet rolled off.

01:21:55 Speaker 2

And I've had that night more mirror.

01:21:58 Speaker 2

For years.

01:21:59 Speaker 2

I get on up to the soldier.

01:22:02 Speaker 2

And he's gone. By the time I get there anyway. But but a lot lot of men will call for their wives or their mothers or something like that. Just before they die.

01:22:12 Speaker 2

And.

01:22:13 Speaker 2

Which?

01:22:15 Speaker 2

And that it could have been me. But it was him.

01:22:21 Speaker 2

And.

01:22:23 Speaker 2

I never told that story for years.

01:22:26 Speaker 2

In years and years, but I always had it in my dreams at night would pop up. I'd see this body and the head roll.

01:22:34 Speaker 2

And.

01:22:36 Speaker 2

Then after I finally started telling about that dream went away.

01:22:41 Speaker 2

I don't have that nightmare now, along with some of this other stuff, and that's the reason.

01:22:45 Speaker 2

That after almost 50 years I tell about this stuff because it's helping me.

01:22:51 Speaker 2

Not that I'm trying to glorify myself in any way or glorify war or anything like that, but it has helped me.

01:22:59 Speaker 2

For what it has done, it has taken away some of these hard dreams and nightmares that I had.

01:23:06 Speaker 2

But it replaced him with others that I hadn't thought about for 50 years. OK, it's amazing that that would do that. I think so. I hadn't thought about it just as clear like it was yesterday. Some of this stuff.

01:23:21 Speaker 1

It's just now beginning to come back because you block.

01:23:23 Speaker 1

It out.

01:23:23 Speaker 2

I blocked. I know. I guess it was so bad or something that.

01:23:27 Speaker 2

Blocked it out the first time or something that but.

01:23:37 Speaker 2

I can, I remember.

01:23:41 Speaker 2

That I would see a dead soldier laying alongside the road on one of ours.

01:23:48 Speaker 2

I'd be dead. And by the way, they didn't get everybody picked up the same day they died.

01:23:54 Speaker 2

I might be there two or three days. Weeks.

01:23:58 Speaker 2

And.

01:23:59 Speaker 2

And I remember seeing him, and I think to myself.

01:24:07 Speaker 2

Yesterday he was where I am now.

01:24:11 Speaker 2

Tomorrow I'll probably be where he is today.

01:24:14 Speaker 2

I'd always think about that.

01:24:19 Speaker 2

They used to issue us a candy bar.

01:24:22 Speaker 2

Once in a while we get candy bars.

01:24:24 Speaker 2

And then maybe you'd get 20 or 30 and then say, well, no, rationally. So you have little energy every day. I hate them. Things as fast as I could because I didn't figure there's gonna be tomorrow. And if I was hungry now, I'll eat them.

01:24:35 Speaker 2

Of course I didn't get anymore till the next time, but just.

01:24:39 Speaker 1

Did you become like fatalistic, you just.

01:24:41 Speaker 1

Think.

01:24:42 Speaker 2

Yeah.

01:24:43 Speaker 1

It may happen any minute now.

01:24:45 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

01:24:47 Speaker 2

And you just.

01:24:52 Speaker 2

Then you then you get this bond between men when you when you.

01:24:57 Speaker 2

Share the same death and I, which I'm fond of. If you could just. I got a buddy in Maryland.

01:25:06 Speaker 2

I'd do anything for him if he needed an I'd give him one or whatever he do. Sing for me. You know, we shared a lot of things together and.

01:25:15 Speaker 2

Uh.

01:25:17 Speaker 2

There's a bond between them and just like the fellow that was in the prison camp at Brooklyn, well, you'd do anything for me. And you didn't even know me. He just. He still gives me gifts and all that kind. It's a kind of a bond that I don't know. It's hard to explain.

01:25:32 Speaker 2

And uh.

01:25:37 Speaker 2

I I've got some more stuff here if you want to hear it.

01:25:42 Speaker 1

Yes, Sir.

01:25:47 Speaker 2

I've had people.

01:25:49 Speaker 2

Asked me. Well, well, what kind of what kind of?

01:25:53 Speaker 2

Reaction did you get from the German people once you took a town?

01:25:59 Speaker 2

And I said, well, in in most cases they was scared of us, but they were they'd get off to the distance, but they didn't give us no resistance or anything.

01:26:12 Speaker 2

And and I remember this one particular case where.

01:26:16

Yeah.

01:26:17 Speaker 2

Where we captured this like a little farm village, you know, like maybe 6 or 8 houses or something like.

01:26:24 Speaker 2

And this woman she comes up to me after we'd tried the town, you know. And there wasn't any German there.

01:26:31 Speaker 2

And she come up to me and just and talking German. And then she wanted me to follow her.

01:26:37 Speaker 2

And so I followed her. But she took me into the house, and I thought maybe there might have been another German soldier hiding in there or something. So.

01:26:47 Speaker 2

I'm in the foreign position and and I'm alert.

01:26:51 Speaker 2

And she takes me into this bedroom.

01:26:54 Speaker 2

And they're laying on a bed.

01:26:57 Speaker 2

With a pink sheet.

01:26:59 Speaker 2

Is the most beautiful girl I've ever seen in my life 18 years old.

01:27:04 Speaker 2

And I don't know what killer.

01:27:06 Speaker 2

But she was dead, laying on us and I the girl had a white long dress on like it was a wedding gown or something, had beautiful hair laying there on this bed and there was a.

01:27:17 Speaker 2

Pink.

01:27:18 Speaker 2

A cover over the bed and this woman. I knew enough German. I didn't know. I knew what she was saying, but I didn't. I knew part of what she saying she was saying.

01:27:26 Speaker 2

Dog, which means one day what she was trying to say. If we had come one day soon.

01:27:32 Speaker 2

I think maybe her daughter would have been alive.

01:27:36 Speaker 2

And I.

01:27:37 Speaker 1

You don't know what killed.

01:27:38 Speaker 1

Her or how she died.

01:27:38 Speaker 2

I don't. I don't know whether the whether what happened, I couldn't understand it well enough.

01:27:43 Speaker 2

It's a beautiful girl. 18 look, I'd say 18 years old and they'd they'd already dressed her and had her on his bed.

01:27:55 Speaker 2

Uh.

01:28:01 Speaker 2

Shut that off.

01:28:04 Speaker 2

But I just want to relate to the fact that that a lot of men wasn't wounded by the enemy. And like I say, I've seen, I've seen men laying their foxholes, stuck their toes up. I anticipate and hoping that they get a piece of artillery in it or they leave with their arms, lay outside their thing, outside their foxhole with hope, and they get a piece of artillery because they figured it was a less.

01:28:24 Speaker 2

Sufficed to lose it to our normal wasn't a lie.

01:28:28 Speaker 2

And.

01:28:29 Speaker 2

There was a certain percentage of men have done that and I can I can remember in one particular case where just we were we were trying to take a a German or German machine gun.

01:28:44 Speaker 2

And.

01:28:46 Speaker 2

I'm firing over this guy's head at the at the at the German machine gun, and he's laying in the foxhole and he's saying hold. Don't stop shooting. Don't stop. Don't stop. Don't.

01:28:55 Speaker 2

Stop, keep shooting. Keep.

01:28:56 Speaker 2

Shooting, you know? And then he wouldn't raise his own. He wouldn't. He wouldn't raise up to help me.

01:29:01 Speaker 2

And I actually felt like shooting.

01:29:04 Speaker 2

Him.

01:29:04

So.

01:29:06 Speaker 2

And he wouldn't do it.

01:29:08 Speaker 2

But he lived.

01:29:10 Speaker 2

You made it general.

01:29:11 Speaker 1

Would you say this is a minority?

01:29:13 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, mine already, definitely.

01:29:14 Speaker 1

What, 10 percent? 15% maybe in the company that would?

01:29:18 Speaker 2

Oh, I'd say 5%. Five or less. Just occasionally you'd see something like that, but a lot of guys, if they got wounded, which wasn't intentional.

01:29:20 Speaker 1

5%.

01:29:28 Speaker 2

They could be awful happy if it was just a minor thing and they know this going back because they're going to get food and water and medication and off that line and couldn't close them and not everybody got wounded, was sad. They was happy. If they wasn't in real bad shape. But there was a lot of them, you know, and really bad.

01:29:45 Speaker 2

And.

01:29:46 Speaker 1

What was the \$1,000,000 round you hear that expression? What would be considered \$1,000,000 wound?

01:29:53 Speaker 2

I've never heard it expressed like that.

01:29:56 Speaker 2

Well, I've seen men with their guts hanging out. I suppose that's \$1,000,000 wound.

01:30:02 Speaker 1

But if you survive.

01:30:02 Speaker 2

Their arms, their arms flowed off.

01:30:04 Speaker 2

Or that type of stuff.

01:30:06 Speaker 1

I think maybe \$1,000,000 wound would be a wound that you couldn't fight any longer, but it wouldn't be real.

01:30:11

Yes.

01:30:11 Speaker 2

Ohh well I am I suppose. Maybe that's rather.

01:30:13 Speaker 1

There'd be some guys who got wounded so much, they're going.

01:30:15 Speaker 2

You know, I was relating into how bad it was.

01:30:18 Speaker 1

Oh OK but \$1,000,000 one for a lot of fellows I think.

01:30:21 Speaker 2

Ohh OK, I see where you're written, yeah.

01:30:23 Speaker 1

Was one that it was, one that knock you out of the war, but it wasn't going to cripple you forever.

01:30:23 Speaker 2

Yeah.

01:30:27 Speaker 2

Oh yeah, that's what I'm saying. Yeah, right.

01:30:32 Speaker 2

Other.

01:30:35 Speaker 2

You're talking. I've had people say, well, what? What kept your sanity? And I said well.

01:30:42 Speaker 2

I never told this for years because I thought I was a little bit off by for telling it and said, well, how do you mean, train your sanity over there.

01:30:50 Speaker 2

Through.

01:30:50 Speaker 2

All this, and I said, well, I would relate to the moon at night.

01:30:55 Speaker 2

When I had the moon, I would talk to the moon and I.

01:30:57 Speaker 2

Relate to the.

01:30:58 Speaker 2

Moon because to me that was like getting a letter from home because that moon.

01:31:04 Speaker 2

In, in just about 12 hours ago, was shining back here in Madison County and it was shining on my loved ones and friends and it was just kind of a bond that I had with that moon because it's been home and he knew what was going on, you know, and I talked to the moon, enough of the cloud, and I couldn't talk to him, know where you been? I haven't seen you, you know.

01:31:23 Speaker 2

And and on this last trip over to the Brooklyn Wall, I had the fortune to to make friends with. One of them was a pastor.